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P 241031Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7609
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEAHLCH/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 001349

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR, INL/LP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/22/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [XL](#) [TD](#)
SUBJECT: SECRETARY AND CARICOM: BROAD DIALOGUE NEEDED

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 1344

Classified By: DCM, Eugene P. Sweeney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Secretary Chertoff,s October 26 meeting with CARICOM representatives highlighted the potential for greater cooperation building on existing structures for Cricket World Cup 2007. CARICOM is happy to receive assistance for Cricket World Cup, and further collaboration on interdicting narcotics, small arms and light weapons trafficking would be welcome. Criminal deportees to the region and the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative remain sticking points that may be eased by more dialogue to better explain the U.S. position. Cooperation on disaster preparation is largely good, but CARICOM would like better early warning information on hurricanes. CARICOM is slowly moving away from overdependence on direct assistance, but clings to the notion that they deserve special treatment by dint of their &traditional ally8 status. CARICOM suggested that the U.S. should pay more attention to the region to keep others from wielding more influence that could be inimical to U.S. interests. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff,s two-hour meeting with CARICOM representatives on October 26 in Port of Spain was largely a success. The meeting covered a wide variety of high-priority issues for CARICOM, and culminated with Secretary Chertoff and T&T Prime Minister Manning signing the US-CARICOM Memorandum of Intent to implement an advance passenger information system, or APIS for Cricket World Cup (CWC) (All other CARICOM members had already signed the MOI). Although CARICOM members repeatedly stated that they were &victims of circumstance and geography8 because of their proximity to the United States and the current worldwide terrorism situation, they were happy to take the opportunity to build closer cooperation with the United States.

CRICKET WORLD CUP: PREPARATIONS MOVING, BUT GAPS REMAIN

13. (C) The indomitable Deputy Prime Minister from Barbados, Mia Mottley, presented CARICOM,s position on APIS and updated Secretary Chertoff on general security plans. She took pains to underscore that &when we agreed to host CWC 2007, the world was a different place, prior to September 11, 2001.... We are not at the center of the Global War on Terrorism, but by virtue of hosting a large sporting event and our dependence on tourism, we have placed ourselves at significant risk, and must take significant precautions.... If not for the increase in global terrorism, we would have been able to handle the games comfortably, and would have had sufficient capacity.8 Still, she acknowledged that APIS would be key to ensuring that spectators moved freely and

safely among the venues, as required by the agreement with the International Cricket Council.

14. (C) DPM Mottley flagged a potential snag with APIS: UK and Canadian airlines claim privacy concerns over their passengers, information being shared with a third party. Mottley noted that, while CARICOM is working with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to resolve the issue, in light of data protection legislation related to passenger name record information, she announced that CARICOM officials are working on a contingency plan. This plan would require CARICOM access to any available watchlists from the U.S., such as the no-fly list, which could be placed on a CARICOM server for vetting those particular flights. Secretary Chertoff responded forcefully, drawing a distinction between APIS information, which is governmental information already contained in travel documents and the more extensive passenger name record information collected by air carriers for commercial purposes. He also noted that APIS was a powerful tool to improve the security of the region for CWC, and should be seen as a building block in ongoing cooperation. He warned that the contingency plan was a far inferior solution, if workable at all. He further offered to speak with EU representatives on APIS, as he has already been actively engaged with them on airline information-sharing issues.

15. (C) Jamaican Minister of National Security Peter Phillips discussed regional resource mobilization for CWC, highlighting the work done over two International Support and Advisory Group meetings to determine what resources exist in the region and where the gaps are. He further noted that CWC is spurring regional coordination and a regional security infrastructure and setting the stage for further U.S./CARICOM cooperation. Phillips pointed out that CARICOM still had the following critical gaps:

- Explosive detection and disposal teams, to include canines
- Troop movement resources, both fixed-wing and rotary aircraft
- Rescue helicopters
- Air surveillance assets
- On-call (that is, not pre-positioned) hostage and counter-terrorism teams ready to deploy to the region as needed.

In order to facilitate any offers of assistance, Phillips designated Colonel Tony Anderson, the head of the CARICOM Operational Planning and Coordinating Staff (COPACS), as the primary liaison.

16. (C) Secretary Chertoff pointed out that it is important to engage with SOUTHCOM and other USG agencies on these issues, since the requirements cut across bureaucratic lines in the U.S. Even though much of it falls outside DHS, Secretary Chertoff indicated that specific needs, such as

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hostage negotiator teams, would be discussed in Washington.

MARITIME SECURITY AND TOURISM SECURITY: DO MORE FOR US!

17. (C) In what was supposed to be a presentation on Caribbean maritime security issues, Rayburn Blackmore, the Minister of National Security from Dominica, spoke somewhat disjunctedly on what a good friend of the United States Dominica is and has been, and how the U.S. should essentially provide all security for the smaller islands so they could focus their budgets on social justice programs. PM Manning attempted to save the discussion by turning towards the geography of the Caribbean, between drug supply and demand, and emphasizing how narcotics and other trafficking is a regional problem, rather than a problem for individual islands. Manning reiterated his offer from the bilateral meeting with Secretary Chertoff (reftel) to patrol the waters of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and to open the T&T Coast Guard to nationals from the OECS. Secretary Chertoff also pointed out the need to take part in

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regional exercises, such as Tradewinds, and for CARICOM to sign the Caribbean Maritime Cooperation Agreement, which would open up collaborative security efforts. He further expressed an interest in formalizing the process for placing U.S. Air Marshals on selected flights to the Caribbean. He also promised to relay CARICOM's requests to Washington, but cautioned that the requests must be weighed in the context of all other security commitments.

¶18. (C) Calixte George, the Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security from St. Lucia, made a short presentation on tourism security issues that was largely in the same vein:

The U.S. is not doing enough for small economies as they transition to tourism economies, and the U.S. should be cautious before issuing travel warnings, maybe even consult with the government, because of the deleterious effect they can have on small, tourism-based economies. George further suggested that the U.S. increase training and state-level partnership programs for tourism infrastructure security specialists or other law enforcement specialists from the Caribbean to learn from the U.S. example. Secretary Chertoff directed CARICOM to approach the Department of State and other agencies which are better able to handle these requests.

DISASTER PREPARATION, WHTI

¶19. (C) The Attorney General of Barbados, Dale Marshall, focused on hurricane preparedness in the Caribbean, and sought closer technical cooperation with the U.S., specifically requesting that NOAA hurricane planes be sent out four days before a hurricane is slated to hit the Windward Islands. He also observed that insurance premiums in the Caribbean go up with each hurricane, even on islands that are not hit, saying that it was an issue CARICOM needed to consider. He closed by asking for engagement before the next hurricane season begins. Secretary Chertoff replied that the USG is already working with the Caribbean Disaster Response Agency, and that mutual aid agreements and pre-staging emergency supplies are vital to an effective disaster response. He further noted that NOAA would be consulted about the hurricane planes, but underscored that the far-advanced warning information is readily available on the internet.

¶10. (C) Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister, William Baldwin Spencer, raised the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), and urged Secretary Chertoff to consider delaying implementing the passport requirement for air travel, citing studies that imply a gap in the stages of implementation would harm tourism destinations that rely on aircraft for U.S. citizen visitors. He urged that both parts of WHTI be implemented simultaneously, ideally delayed until ¶2009.

¶11. (C) Secretary Chertoff took the opportunity to clarify that there would not be a two-year gap, as Spencer indicated, but rather that the target for cruise ship compliance is ¶2008. He noted that approximately 80 percent of air travelers have passports, and over 90 percent of cruise passengers book over four months in advance, providing ample time to obtain a passport. He reassured CARICOM by explaining that the USG had undertaken a massive information campaign and that they might be ¶flexible8 for those few U.S. citizens who had not obtained passports by January 8, 2007 and who sought reentry into the United States.

CRIMINAL DEPORTEES, SMALL ARMS: CARICOM STEPS NEEDED

¶12. (C) Ralph Fonseca, Minister of Home Affairs and Public Utilities from Belize, started the discussion on criminal deportees with a plea for better notification of arrivals, especially for the time of CWC, if not beyond. Jamaican Minister of National Security Phillips piggy-backed on this

statement to preview the CARICOM-commissioned studies on deportees in Jamaica, Guyana and T&T. Their initial data indicated a link between deported criminals (from the U.S., UK or Canada) and an increase in violent crime, as well as hinting that deported criminals maintain links to their criminal networks in the U.S., which they import to the Caribbean. Further, Phillips noted that many deportees have limited links to their country of nationality, and asked for increased dialogue on this issue, especially to discuss pre-deportation and post-arrival integration and orientation programs. T&T PM Manning further elaborated that their study,s preliminary data showed an overwhelming majority (62 percent) had committed at least one crime since arrival back in T&T.

¶13. (C) Secretary Chertoff sympathized with the need for better notification, and pointed out that the U.S. notifies twice: first when requesting travel documents and second, 72 hours prior to departure from the U.S. He offered to work with CARICOM to ensure (continued) timely notification about deportees, arrival, but requested that CARICOM countries work with the U.S. on issuing travel documents more quickly. He finished his discussion by reiterating that the U.S. operates well within the boundaries of the law on this issue, and that countries have a responsibility to take back their citizens.

¶14. (C) Getting in the last word on this contentious issue, PM Manning suggested that the U.S. should foster preferential treatment for CARICOM based on the economic and social contributions the region makes. He encouraged a wide dialogue on the issue in the upcoming months.

¶15. (C) Minister Phillips moved into small arms and light weapons (SALW), noting that the Caribbean does not manufacture weapons, but that there is an increase in the number of arms flowing through the region. He noted that CARICOM discussed this issue with Secretary Rice in February, and would like to broaden the partnership on combating SALW trafficking, possibly through greater information sharing to track manufacture and ownership as well as investigative assistance. Secretary Chertoff responded that at the February meeting a draft agreement on SALW was discussed, and that the ball was now in CARICOM,s court. The USG was in agreement on most of the issues raised, but needed that agreement published to unlock the assistance requested.

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CLOSING COMMENTS: HELP US, OR SOMEONE ELSE WILL
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¶16. (C) DPM Mottley elaborated on her earlier comments, suggesting that American attention to the Caribbean has waned since the 1980s, and that CARICOM must come to grips with the fact that they are victims of circumstance in the world. She cautioned that if the United States, a traditional ally of the Caribbean, retreats in terms of assistance and influence, then others will enter, seeking to influence the region with their potentially anti-U.S. ideologies. She noted that some recent foreign policy moves by the United States, such as the International Criminal Court Article 98 restrictions or terrorist financing laws that erroneously singled out some Caribbean countries as violators, seemed short-sighted and ill-informed and only alienated the region. She asked for a revitalized dialogue to resolve these issues and others, especially in light of the traditional partnership between the Caribbean and the U.S.

¶17. C) COMMENT: Apart from the presentations on maritime and tourism security, CARICOM largely refrained from its typical model of requesting direct foreign assistance. Rather, the presentations seemed to have been well thought-out to focus on partnership and collaboration, rather than on assistance and donations. Disturbingly, CARICOM has latched on to the idea that they deserve special treatment as traditional allies when the countries often resist working with the U.S. in international fora such as the UN. CWC security cooperation could be a vehicle for broadening

our partnership beyond security issues into political arenas,
but such a move will, as repeated over and over, require
ongoing dialogue to reach a meeting of the minds. END
COMMENT.

118. (U) DHS has cleared this cable.

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